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Pakistan signs up for 'Board of Peace'

• PM Shehbaz inks board charter alongside Trump, 18 other world leaders at Davos ceremony • After musing about 'replacing UN', US president says board will work in conjunction with world body • Britain, France and China do not join; no official word from Russia despite Trump claim that Putin is onboard • Kushner unveils plans for glitzy 'New Gaza' resort of skyscrapers by the sea

DAVOS: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday joined other world leaders in signing the charter of the 'Board of Peace' — led by US President Donald Trump — despite widespread scepticism over the plan that seemingly aims to rewrite world order.

On Thursday, a group of leaders and senior officials from 19 countries — including Pakistan — gathered on stage alongside Trump at a signing ceremony in Switzerland to put their names to the founding charter of the body.

Held on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum meeting, the ceremony saw Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif signing the document on behalf of Pakistan, along with other world leaders and officials from Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bulgaria, Hungary, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Mongolia, Morocco, Paraguay, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, the United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan.

The US president declared, "Everybody in this room is a star […] There's a reason that you're here. When you use that inspired genius for peace, the opposite of peace has no chance."

"Every one of them are friends of mine. I like every single one of them," Trump said about the signatories.

"Just about every country wants to be a part of it. We sent out the letters a couple of days ago and countries that are here just happened to be in Davos," he said.

Replacing UN?

"Once this board is completely formed, we can do pretty much whatever we want to do. And we'll do it in conjunction with the United Nations," Trump said, adding that the UN had great potential that had not been fully utilised.

PM, army chief hold key meetings on WEF sidelines: Page 5

Board takes shape: Editorial on Page 6

Iran warns 'finger on trigger' as Trump claims Tehran wants talks: Page 12

These comments followed earlier assertions by the US president that his proposed board may "replace the UN".

The board's creation was endorsed by a United Nations Security Council resolution as part of Trump's Gaza peace plan, and UN spokesperson Rolando Gomez said on Thursday that UN engagement with the board would only be in that context.

After Trump's address, the heads of various countries took turns to sign the board's charter.

Apart from the US, no other permanent member of the UNSC — the five nations with the most say over international law and diplomacy since the end of World War II — has so far committed to join.

France has declined to join, saying that its charter does not correspond with a UN resolution to resolve the war in Gaza, and some of the charter's elements were contrary to the UN charter.

Britain also said on Thursday it was not joining at present, as Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper pointed out that, "There's a huge amount of work to do".

China has not yet said whether it will do so. While the US president said Russian President Vladimir Putin had also agreed to join, the Kremlin said he was still studying the invitation.

However, the Board of Peace's potential membership has been controversial, with Trump inviting Israel's PM too. Although Benjamin Netanyahu has said Israel will join the board, he was not at the ceremony.

'New Gaza' plans

US officials also presented their vision for a "New Gaza" that would turn the shattered Palestinian territory into a glitzy resort of skyscrapers by the sea, saying the transformation could emerge in three years.

A large part of the ceremony was devoted to talking about its plans for the devastated enclave. Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner — a former property developer like the president — showed slides of what he billed as a "master plan" for Gaza's

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(LEFT to right) PM Shehbaz Sharif, Kosovo's President Vjosa Osmani, Morocco's Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita, Argentinian President Javier Milei, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Mongolian PM Gombojav Zandanshatar, Armenia's premier Nikol Pashinyan and others look on as US President Donald Trump signs the founding charter of the 'Board of Peace' at a ceremony in Davos.—AFP

Amid opposition outcry, govt defends Gaza board membership

• Those expecting Trump to bring peace living in 'fool's paradise', Fazl tells NA • PTI leaders rue parliament not being taken into confidence on critical issue • Point out board 'not a UN body', has no Palestinian representation

By Iftikhar A. Khan and Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: Amid an outcry from the opposition over Pakistan's decision to join US President Donald Trump's 'Board of Peace', the government defended the move in the National Assembly, saying the country joined the body meant to oversee Gaza's rebuilding in the interest of the Palestinian people.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry told the House on Thursday that Pakistan had a principled position on the Palestine issue and always raised it at international forums.

But in a hard-hitting speech, JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman warned against becoming part of any campaign to disarm Hamas.

Joint session today to take up bills returned by president: Page 3

He said those responsible for the Palestine crisis were now forming a so-called peace board and that expecting peace from Trump was tantamount to "living in a fool's paradise".

He noted that Trump himself chaired the board and appointed its members at his own discretion.

He said Trump abducted the president of Venezuela and his spouse, while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — the butcher of Palestine responsible for the killing of thousands — should have refused to sit on such a controversial board.

"We must not accept this board of peace under any circumstances," he said, adding that even as bombings were still continuing in Gaza, Netanyahu and PM

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PTA recounts failed attempts at blocking Imran's X account

By Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) made three attempts over the past three and a half years to have PTI founder Imran Khan's official X account terminated or its content blocked, according to a report submitted to the Islamabad High Court.

The report, submitted in response to a petition seeking a ban Mr Khan's X account, outlines the government's efforts to remove the PTI founder's account on X (formerly Twitter).

According to the report, the authority first approached X on Aug 21, 2022, requesting the closure of the PTI founder's official account. The social media platform declined the request.

The PTA wrote to X again on April 18, 2024, seeking the closure of the account based on Mr Khan's convictions in the Toshakhana, Cipher, and Iddat cases. This request was also rejected.

The report further stated that on Nov 27, 2025, the PTA asked X to block 47 tweets posted from the

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ON OTHER PAGES

No Basant kite flying in Lahore parks

Kite flying in public parks and greenbelts on Basant has been banned, as the Lahore administration decided to digitally monitor the three-day festival, starting Feb 6, to ensure compliance. An official said the decision was made to ensure that kite flying and related celebrations did not harm trees and other park infrastructure. 'The parks would remain open to the people, but they wouldn't be allowed for kite flying,' he added. **Page 3**

Used phone rates to fall as govt revisits valuation

• Ruling covers 62 models across Apple, Samsung, Google Pixel, OnePlus • iPhones see steepest cuts • Values apply regardless of condition; accessories not included • Phones must be activated six months before import

By Mubarak Zeb Khan

ISLAMABAD: As mobile phone prices remain elevated for new buyers due to higher assessed values, the Customs Valuation Department has reduced assessment rates for duties and taxes on the commercial import of used and old mobile phone sets to ease pressure on consumers in the used smartphone market.

At the same time, fresh assessment values have been set for high-end used iPhone models, ranging from the iPhone 14 and its variants to the iPhone 15 series. For Samsung, Google Pixel and OnePlus, the assessed rates have largely been left unchanged or fixed for the first time.

The revised rates were notified through Valuation Ruling No. 2035 of 2026, which will come into effect from Jan 16, 2026.

Customs officials said the revision reflects a decline in international prices of older smartphones, particularly iPhones, as these devices approach the end of their commercial life cycle.

The downward adjustment, they added, is intended to align valuations with market rates and ensure the benefit is passed on to end consumers

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MQM, PPP trade barbs over demand for 'federal Karachi'

By Imran Ayub

KARACHI: Allies of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in the Centre, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), clashed on Thursday after the MQM-P accused the Sindh government of "chronic misgovernance" in Karachi and demanded federal control of the city, drawing a strong response from the PPP that blamed the party for past violence in the metropolis.

The exchange began when senior MQM-P leader and federal Minister for Health Syed Mustafa Kamal,

Lethal structures: Editorial on Page 6

Gul Plaza fire death toll rises to 67 as search continues for sixth day: Page 13

addressing a press conference at the party's Bahadurabad headquarters, said the loss of human lives in Karachi had become routine and that no authority was willing to guarantee such incidents would not recur, referring to the recent deadly fire at Gul Plaza.

"At times, innocent children die after falling into open gutters, and at other times, multi-storey buildings collapse due to corruption and criminal negligence within the administration," he said.

Mr Kamal held the Sindh government responsible for incidents such as the Gul Plaza tragedy, describing them as the outcome of

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